



Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Performance: A Systematic Review and Thematic Synthesis of Mechanisms, Contexts and Outcomes (2014-2025)

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Abstract: Purpose: This review explains how knowledge sharing is converted into organizational performance and identifies the organizational, technological and contextual conditions that enable, constrain or redirect this conversion.

Design/methodology/approach: A systematic literature review covering 2014-2025 was conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020 reporting principles and management-review guidance. The final analytical corpus comprises 92 empirical studies: 46 published during 2014-2024 and 46 published in 2025. The 2014-2024 screening sequence reported in the manuscript began with 1,204 records, of which 912 remained after deduplication; 96 were assessed in full text and 46 were retained. For 2025, 75 records were identified; after removal of duplicates/overlaps, one out-of-period record and two retracted reports, 67 were assessed and 46 retained. Eligibility, extraction and thematic coding were conducted by a single primary reviewer using explicit criteria, an audit trail and repeated coding. The synthesis combined descriptive mapping with iterative thematic analysis; no meta-analysis was conducted because constructs, outcome levels and effect statistics were heterogeneous.

Findings: Across the 2014-2025 literature, five interdependent themes emerged: enabling and inhibiting conditions; forms and quality of knowledge sharing; conversion mechanisms; multidimensional performance outcomes; and boundary conditions. The evidence is consistent with a conditional conversion pathway in which culture, trust, leadership, support, structure and digital infrastructure shape exchange, while learning, innovation, improvisation, agility, ambidexterity, knowledge quality and application help explain how sharing is associated with performance. The 2025 subset places stronger emphasis on artificial intelligence, human-machine interaction, knowledge-sharing quality, sustainability and the balance between sharing and protection. This late-period concentration is interpreted as an emerging development rather than a definitive temporal break. Mixed and non-significant findings show that more sharing is not automatically better.

Research limitations/implications: The evidence remains dominated by cross-sectional, self-reported SEM studies and emerging-economy contexts. A single-reviewer process and heterogeneous outcome measures limit causal and statistical generalization. **Practical implications:** Managers should manage the complete conversion chain: identify strategically relevant knowledge, create safe and well-governed sharing channels, validate quality, embed application in work processes and evaluate proximal and distal performance outcomes.

Originality/value: The review extends earlier enabler-process-outcome syntheses by isolating the knowledge-sharing-to-performance pathway, separating proximal from distal performance outcomes, incorporating boundary conditions and failure paths, and proposing a dynamic conversion framework that integrates AI, knowledge quality, ambidexterity and governance. It also distinguishes established themes across the review period from emerging emphases concentrated in the 2025 subset.

Keywords: knowledge sharing; organizational performance; knowledge management; systematic literature review; thematic synthesis; innovation; artificial intelligence; organizational learning; ambidexterity

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1 Introduction

Knowledge is a strategic resource only when it can be mobilized in organizational action. The knowledge-based view argues that firms create value by integrating dispersed expertise rather than merely possessing information (Grant, 1996). Knowledge sharing is therefore a conversion activity through which experience, advice, skills and codified content become accessible to other organizational members and can be recombined in decisions, routines and innovation. This distinction is important because repositories, experts and digital platforms do not improve performance unless knowledge is interpreted, trusted and applied.

Knowledge sharing includes the donation and collection of task-relevant knowledge, the exchange of explicit material through documents and digital systems, and the transfer of tacit know-how through observation, dialogue, mentoring and joint problem solving. Previous reviews have established a broad set of antecedents, including individual motivation, trust, organizational culture, leadership, rewards and information technology (Wang and Noe, 2010). Ahmad and Karim (2019) subsequently showed that sharing produces outcomes at individual, team and organizational levels, particularly performance, learning and creativity. Yeboah (2023) organized the wider literature into enablers, processes and outcomes and emphasized the need to align sharing with organizational strategy.

Despite this progress, the knowledge-sharing-performance relationship remains theoretically fragmented. Studies alternate between direct-effect models and complex mediation or moderation models; they mix employee, team, innovation, operational, financial and sustainable performance; and they frequently treat sharing frequency as equivalent to value realization. Yet knowledge may be inaccurate, obsolete, decontextualized, hidden or excessively abundant. Recipients may lack absorptive capacity, decision authority or time to apply it. Performance is therefore better understood as the end of a conversion chain than as an automatic consequence of exchange.

Within the 2014-2025 literature, studies published toward the end of the period make this problem more visible. Recent research connects knowledge sharing to webtop applications, artificial intelligence, human-machine interaction, digital leadership, Industry 4.0, remote work and big-data innovation (Alam et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025; Ahmad et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025; Karimi et al., 2025). Other studies foreground sharing quality, ambidexterity, knowledge protection, organizational support and sustainability (Dzenopoljac et al., 2025a, 2025b; Guo and Xi, 2025; Alqatan et al., 2025). These developments widen the explanatory field but also increase conceptual heterogeneity.

A focused systematic review covering 2014-2025 is needed for four reasons. First, performance outcomes must be separated by level and time horizon. Second, the mechanisms converting exchange into performance require integration. Third, digital and AI-enabled sharing creates new issues of provenance, validation, risk and human judgment. Fourth, findings across the period contain meaningful exceptions and contradictions that cannot be captured by a simple positive-effects narrative.

Accordingly, this review addresses four research questions. RQ1 asks how the literature has conceptualized and investigated the knowledge-sharing-performance relationship across contexts, methods, theories and time. RQ2 asks which organizational and technological conditions enable or inhibit knowledge sharing. RQ3 asks through which mechanisms knowledge sharing is associated with employee, team, innovation and organizational performance. RQ4 asks which boundary conditions, contradictory findings and methodological gaps should guide future research. The review contributes a descriptive map of the 2014-2025 evidence base, a thematic synthesis of the knowledge-sharing-to-performance pathway, a cautious comparison of earlier- and late-period emphases, and an integrative conversion framework for research and practice.

Table I. Research questions and analytical rationale

Research question	Analytical rationale
RQ1. How is the relationship studied and how has emphasis evolved?	Maps theories, sectors, countries, research designs, units of analysis, performance measures and temporal emphases.
RQ2. What enables or inhibits sharing?	Identifies cultural, relational, leadership, structural, technological and HR conditions.
RQ3. Through which mechanisms is sharing associated with performance?	Synthesizes learning, innovation, agility, ambidexterity, knowledge quality, empowerment and application mechanisms.
RQ4. What are the boundaries and gaps?	Examines non-significant and negative findings, contextual contingencies, methodological weaknesses and future research needs.

2 Conceptual background

2.1 Knowledge sharing as a socio-technical and relational process

Knowledge sharing is not the passive availability of information. It involves a provider who externalizes knowledge, a recipient who interprets it, and an organizational setting that permits feedback and application. The process may occur within teams, across departments, between organizations or through digital communities. Its effectiveness depends jointly on people, relationships, structures and technology.

Tacit and explicit knowledge require different conditions. Explicit knowledge is codifiable, searchable and scalable, making it useful for standardization, compliance and routine problem solving. Tacit knowledge is embedded in experience and judgment and generally requires rich interaction, shared context and repeated practice. Evidence across the 2014-2025 period reinforces this distinction: tacit sharing improved sharing quality in Serbian SMEs, while explicit sharing did not show the same effect (Dzenopoljac et al., 2025b); in megaprojects, structural, trust and support conditions affected tacit sharing and innovation differently (Kan et al., 2025).

Direction and quality also matter. Knowledge donating without active collection can produce unused content, while collection without reciprocal contribution can erode trust. High volume cannot compensate for low relevance, accuracy, currency, provenance or actionability. Knowledge-sharing quality therefore functions as a capability in its own right rather than a simple by-product of communication.

2.2 Organizational performance as a multidimensional and multilevel outcome

Organizational performance is multidimensional and cannot be represented by a single undifferentiated measure (Richard et al., 2009). At the individual level, studies assess productivity, task performance, innovative work behavior, creative teaching and competitive productivity. At team and project levels, they assess coordination, project success, portfolio performance and R&D innovation. At organizational level, they examine operational efficiency, financial and non-financial outcomes, strategic business performance, sustainability, agility and innovation.

These outcomes differ in proximity to knowledge sharing. Faster problem solving, improved learning and reduced search time are proximal outcomes. Innovation quality, operational reliability and employee performance require additional application. Financial and sustainable performance are distal outcomes that may appear only after substantial time lags. Treating all levels as interchangeable risks attributing firm-level effects to individual perceptions or assuming that innovation automatically produces financial returns.

2.3 A conversion-chain perspective

The knowledge-based view explains why access to distributed expertise can improve performance, but it does not by itself specify the social willingness to share or the organizational processes that convert exchange into action. Social-exchange theory explains reciprocity, fairness, support and trust; organizational-learning theory explains how exchange becomes shared understanding and routines; dynamic-capability theory explains how knowledge supports sensing, seizing, reconfiguration and innovation.

Integrating these perspectives suggests a chain: enabling conditions shape willingness and opportunity; knowledge-sharing practices increase access and recombination; conversion mechanisms transform exchange into learning, innovation or execution; and outcomes emerge at different levels. Contextual contingencies influence every link, while realized performance feeds back into trust, routines and future sharing capacity. This conversion logic guides the thematic analysis.

2.4 Positioning relative to earlier systematic reviews

Ahmad and Karim (2019) reviewed 61 empirical studies and organized impacts at individual, team and organizational levels. Yeboah (2023) reviewed 110 articles across enablers, processes and outcomes and highlighted the imbalance between research on enablers and research on barriers, strategy alignment and non-financial outcomes. These reviews provide essential taxonomies but were not designed to isolate the full performance-conversion pathway or to capture the rapid expansion of AI-enabled sharing, human-machine interaction, knowledge quality and sharing-protection ambidexterity.

The present review retains the useful enabler-process-outcome architecture but deepens it in three ways: it makes conversion mechanisms explicit; separates performance by level and time horizon; and integrates boundary conditions and mixed findings rather than treating positive associations as universal.

3 Method

3.1 Review design and protocol

The study was designed as a systematic literature review covering 2014-2025 using PRISMA 2020 reporting principles (Page et al., 2021), evidence-informed management-review guidance (Tranfield et al., 2003; Snyder, 2019) and the protocol-search-appraisal-synthesis-analysis-reporting logic used in structured reviews. The process comprised protocol definition, database searching, eligibility screening, full-text assessment, data extraction, quality appraisal, descriptive mapping, thematic coding and interpretive synthesis.

A statistical meta-analysis was not conducted because the studies employed heterogeneous constructs, outcome levels, analytical models and effect statistics. The review therefore uses an integrative thematic synthesis designed to explain patterns, mechanisms, configurations and contradictions rather than estimate a pooled average effect.

3.2 Information sources and search strategy for 2014-2025

Scopus and Web of Science were the principal databases used in this review, which covered publications dated from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2025. The search strategy combined terms related to knowledge sharing, or clearly specified knowledge-sharing processes, with organizationally relevant performance outcomes. Records were screened by a single primary reviewer through title/abstract assessment followed by full-text eligibility assessment. To improve consistency in the absence of duplicate independent screening, the reviewer applied explicit inclusion/exclusion rules, maintained an audit trail, revisited borderline records and repeated coding checks. Database-specific Boolean strings, search dates and field restrictions are provided in the supplementary search log.

For the 2014–2024 period, the initial database search identified 1,204 records addressing the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational performance. After deduplication, 912 records remained. A preliminary title-based relevance filter retained 240 records for closer screening. Subsequent title/abstract eligibility assessment reduced this set to 96 reports for full-text assessment, of which 46 unique empirical studies were retained. The title-based preliminary filter increased specificity but may have excluded relevant studies whose focal relationship appeared in abstracts or keywords rather than titles; this potential source of under-retrieval is therefore treated as a review limitation.

For publications dated in 2025, the Scopus and Web of Science exports identified 75 candidate records. Before substantive screening, five duplicate or overlapping reports, one record published in 2026 and two retracted reports were removed. The remaining 67 reports were screened and assessed against the same substantive eligibility criteria, and 46 studies were retained after full-text evaluation. Because The 2025 subset contains more detailed study-level extraction data than the 2014–2024 subset, cross-period comparisons are interpreted descriptively rather than as formal trend tests.

Combining the 46 eligible studies published between 2014 and 2024 with the 46 studies published in 2025 resulted in a final analytical corpus of 92 studies covering 2014–2025. Figure 2 consolidates the documented screening counts for both temporal segments. Full texts were the primary basis for eligibility and interpretation; structured abstracts were used to standardize descriptive extraction for the 2025 subset.

3.3 Eligibility criteria

Table II. Eligibility criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Peer-reviewed empirical study published in English from 2014 to 2025	Conceptual paper, editorial, book review, systematic review or non-empirical commentary
Knowledge sharing is a focal construct, mechanism, mediator, moderator or clearly operationalized process	Knowledge sharing is mentioned only peripherally or replaced by generic information sharing
Reports employee, team/project, innovation, operational, financial, strategic or sustainable performance	No organizationally relevant performance outcome
Indexed in Scopus or Web of Science and available for full-text eligibility assessment	Duplicate, overlapping report, retracted article or publication outside the period
Method and results are sufficiently described for thematic extraction	Insufficient information to determine the sharing-performance relationship

3.4 Study selection and full-text assessment

Titles and abstracts were used for initial relevance screening. All potentially eligible reports were then read in full before retention. The full-text assessment verified the operational role of knowledge sharing, the level and measurement of performance, the empirical design and the substantive relevance of the reported relationship. A single primary exclusion reason was recorded for each excluded report.

Figure 2 presents the selection and assembly of the 2014-2025 analytical corpus using the counts documented in the manuscript. For 2014–2024, it reports 1,204 records identified, 912 after deduplication, 240 retained after preliminary title-based relevance filtering, 96 full texts assessed and 46 studies retained. For 2025, 75 records were identified, eight were removed before substantive screening, 67 were assessed and 46 were retained. The final corpus therefore comprises 92 studies. Reasons for exclusion were not disaggregated for every stage of the 2014–2024 screening process, which limits the level of detail available for reconstructing the selection process.

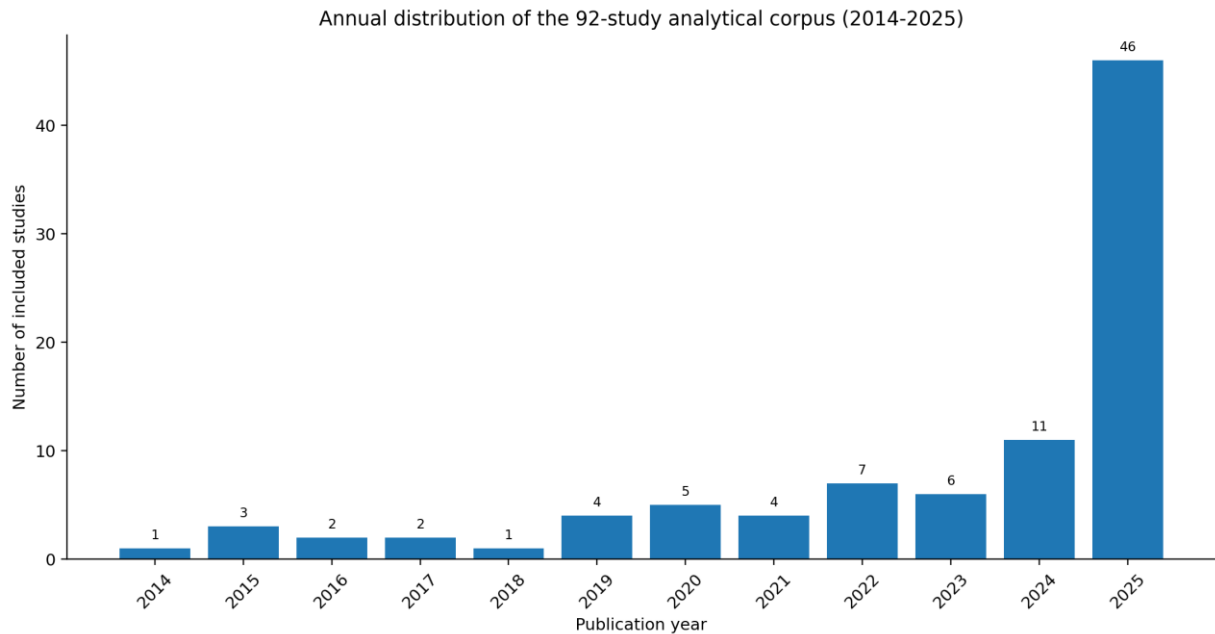


Figure 1. Annual distribution of the 92-study analytical corpus (2014-2025)

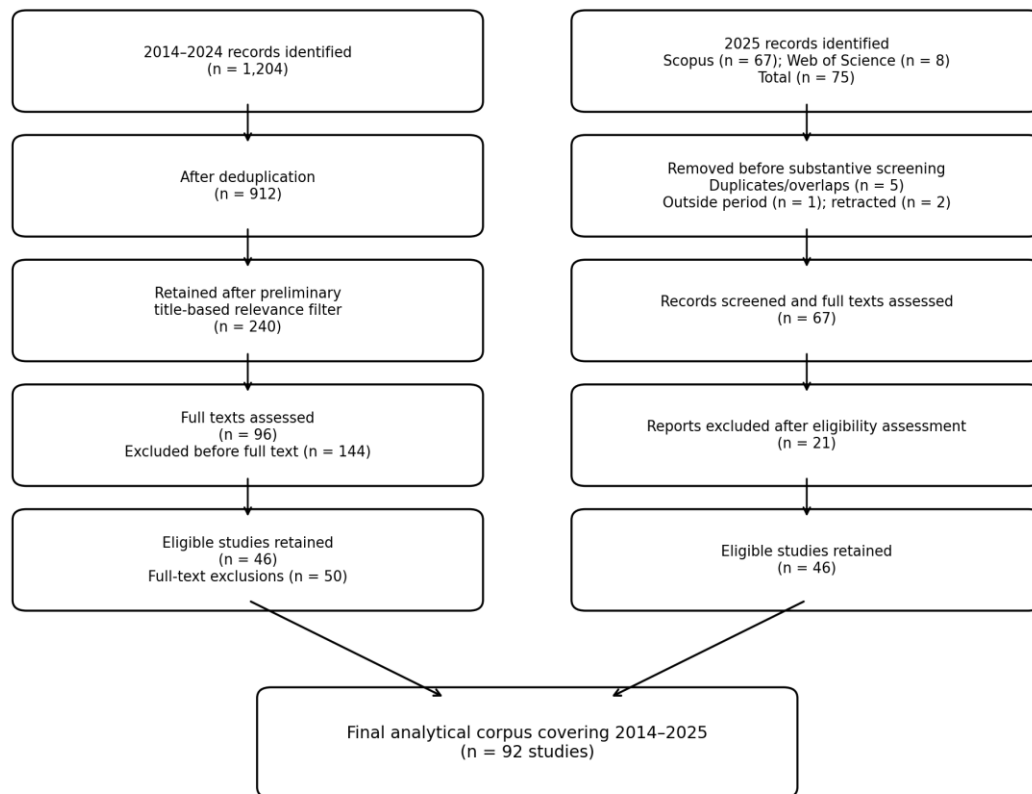


Figure 2. Selection and assembly of the 2014-2025 analytical corpus

3.5 Data extraction and thematic coding

The study was the unit of analysis. The extraction form captured bibliographic information, country and sector, sample and design, theory, the form and analytical role of knowledge sharing, performance domain, mediators, moderators, significant and non-significant results, limitations and future research suggestions. Full texts—particularly theory, method, results, discussion and limitations—were the primary source for eligibility and interpretation. Structured abstracts supported standardized descriptive extraction for the 2025 subset. Study-level extraction was used as an audit trail to support the traceability of descriptive and thematic claims to individual studies.

The thematic analysis followed familiarization, initial coding, theme development, review, definition and interpretive reporting (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An a priori framework based on enablers, processes and outcomes was combined with inductive coding. Coding proceeded in two passes: an initial pass assigned studies to broad families, and a second pass revisited the evidence against explicit code definitions, allowing categories to be merged, split or reassigned when necessary. The final themes were: (1) enabling and inhibiting conditions; (2) forms, directions and quality of sharing; (3) conversion mechanisms; (4) performance outcomes; and (5) boundary conditions and tensions. Categories were allowed to overlap because individual studies commonly examined several mechanisms and outcomes.

Coding emphasized reported relationships rather than isolated keywords. A study was coded to a mechanism only when the abstract or full-text assessment described how knowledge sharing transmitted, strengthened, weakened or redirected an association. Non-significant and negative findings were retained to identify boundary conditions and reduce positive-result bias. In the single-reviewer design, consistency was supported by repeated coding, use of the thematic codebook in Appendix B and reconciliation of borderline assignments against the stated coding rules; no inter-rater reliability statistic is claimed.

3.6 Quality appraisal and threats to validity

A design-sensitive appraisal was used, drawing on MMAT/JBI principles rather than applying a clinical-trial bias tool to heterogeneous management studies. Appraisal considered clarity of the research question, sampling

appropriateness, construct validity, fit between design and analysis, reporting completeness, treatment of common-method risk and alignment between evidence and causal claims. No composite numerical quality score was used as an automatic exclusion threshold. Instead, appraisal informed interpretive weight: findings from designs with stronger alignment between question, measurement and analysis were treated as more persuasive than claims resting on weak causal designs or poorly specified constructs.

The principal threat to conclusion validity is the dominance of cross-sectional self-report studies. Construct validity is threatened by broad or perceptual performance measures and by inconsistent distinctions among sharing, transfer, application and general knowledge management. External validity is limited by single-country, single-sector and emerging-economy samples. Review validity is limited by a single-reviewer screening and coding process; this was mitigated through explicit criteria, an audit trail, repeated coding and systematic attention to contradictory findings.

4 Results

4.1 Profile of the evidence base

The final 2014–2025 synthesis contains 92 studies. Figure 1 shows gradual growth in the number of included studies from 2014 to 2024, followed by a marked concentration in 2025, which accounts for 46 studies—half of the analytical corpus. This concentration warrants analytical attention but should not, by itself, be interpreted as evidence of a field-wide discontinuity because the 2025 subset contains more detailed study-level information than the 2014–2024 subset.

Within the 2025 subset, methods were concentrated in quantitative structural models: 32 studies used SEM or PLS-SEM, seven used other quantitative models, two employed fsQCA/configurational analysis, three used mixed or multi-method designs and two were qualitative. Innovation-related outcomes appeared in 28 studies, organizational outcomes in 25, employee outcomes in 12, team/project outcomes in five and explicit sustainability outcomes in three; categories overlap. These counts describe the 2025 subset and should not be generalized as frequencies for the full 2014–2025 corpus.

The 2025 subset also broadened the visible theoretical and topical range toward artificial intelligence, human-machine interaction, digital leadership, Industry 4.0, remote work, knowledge-sharing quality, ambidexterity, sustainability and knowledge-protection tensions. Knowledge-based and resource-based views, dynamic capabilities and organizational learning remained prominent, while social-exchange, technology-acceptance, socio-technical and governance perspectives were used to explain leadership, digital systems and sharing-protection tensions.

4.1.1 Temporal comparison and late-period development

The earlier-period literature represented in the manuscript already addressed social and organizational conditions, culture, agility, learning, inter-organizational exchange and innovation. Representative studies examined organizational social factors and employee performance (Park et al., 2015), knowledge sharing and organizational agility (Salehzadeh et al., 2017), cultural configurations linking sharing and performance (Olan et al., 2019), organizational learning as a mechanism connecting sharing and employee performance (Meher and Mishra, 2022), inter-organizational knowledge sharing and innovation (Wang et al., 2022), and contingencies involving trust, formal contracts, market turbulence and firm performance (Sun et al., 2023).

The 2024 literature cited in the manuscript further extends these concerns toward knowledge quality and ambidexterity (Dzenopoljac et al., 2024), HR systems and perceived organizational support (Jeong et al., 2024; Le and Van Ha, 2024), technological culture and digital innovation (Mollah et al., 2024), and multi-country culture-sharing-performance relationships (Raziq et al., 2024). Against this background, the 2025 subset shows an emerging late-period acceleration around AI, human-machine interaction, sustainability, digital transformation and sharing-protection ambidexterity. Because the current appendix provides a complete study-level extraction only for the 2025 subset, this temporal comparison is descriptive and should not be interpreted as a formal frequency-based trend test.

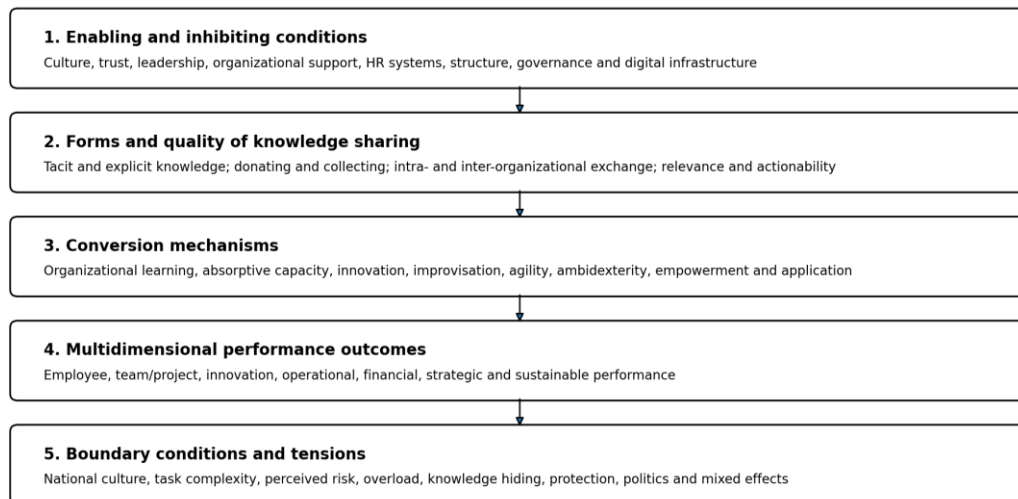
Table III. Descriptive profile of the 2025 subset (n = 46) within the 2014–2025 corpus

Dimension	Category	Studies (n)
Method	SEM/PLS-SEM	32
Method	Other quantitative	7
Method	Configurational/fsQCA	2
Method	Mixed/multi-method	3

Dimension	Category	Studies (n)
Method	Qualitative	2
Performance domain*	Innovation/creative/NPD	28
Performance domain*	Organizational/firm/operational	25
Performance domain*	Employee/individual	12
Performance domain*	Team/project	5
Performance domain*	Sustainable performance	3
Theme*	Learning, innovation and conversion	27
Theme*	Boundary conditions/mixed findings	26
Theme*	Leadership, support and HR	17
Theme*	Digitalization and AI	15
Theme*	Culture, trust and communication	14

* Categories overlap because a study may address multiple outcomes or themes.

Thematic architecture of the knowledge-sharing-performance literature (2014-2025)



The themes are interdependent and jointly explain when, how and with what consequences knowledge is shared.

Figure 3. Thematic architecture of the 2014-2025 synthesis

4.2 Theme 1: Enabling and inhibiting conditions

4.2.1 Culture, trust, communication and psychological safety

Culture and relational climate constitute a recurrent enabling cluster across the review period. Earlier studies examined organizational social factors and knowledge sharing in relation to employee performance (Park et al., 2015), cultural configurations linking sharing with organizational performance (Olan et al., 2019), and multi-country culture-sharing-performance relationships (Raziq et al., 2024). In the 2025 subset, adaptability, involvement, mission and communication culture were associated with whether employees used knowledge systems, sought expertise and treated exchange as legitimate work rather than optional behavior (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Ahmad et al., 2025). Trust also appeared as a direct or indirect condition: it can reduce perceived interpersonal risk, support reciprocity and increase willingness to rely on shared knowledge. Yaqub and Alsabban (2025) reported a trust-sharing-performance pathway that was contingent on organizational culture.

Culture is not a uniform positive variable. Cross-cultural evidence indicates that explicit communication may be more performance-relevant in individualist than collectivist settings (Stefanidis et al., 2025). In family businesses

and inter-organizational networks, tie strength and structural boundaries can either facilitate rich tacit exchange or constrain access (Awada and Haj Youssef, 2025). The implication is that a 'sharing culture' must be decomposed into trust, openness, mission, learning orientation, communication norms and protection expectations.

4.2.2 Leadership, support, HR systems and social control

Leadership, organizational support and HR systems recur as conditions surrounding knowledge sharing. Earlier-period work examined perceived organizational support and coaching leadership in relation to knowledge-sharing behavior (Jeong et al., 2024) and knowledge-based HRM, organizational support, sharing and innovation performance (Le and Van Ha, 2024). In the 2025 subset, servant, authentic, strategic and transformational leadership were reported in models linking sharing, organizational learning, innovation and performance (Rizki et al., 2025; Alneyadi and Cherian, 2025; Khalifa et al., 2025; Mokhchy et al., 2025). These findings are best interpreted as evidence that leadership shapes the conditions under which sharing and application occur rather than as a uniform direct effect.

HR and social-control practices also matter. Promoter roles facilitated sharing and reduced conflict in innovation portfolios (Globocnik and Faullant, 2025). Workplace training produced stronger organizational results when newly acquired knowledge was both transferred and shared, supported by supervisors and peers (Mehner et al., 2025). Knowledge-oriented culture and top-management knowledge values supported innovation through sharing, whereas knowledge-based rewards were non-significant in one SME study (Abdelwahed et al., 2025). Incentives therefore appear most useful when they recognize relevance and reuse rather than sheer contribution volume.

4.2.3 Digital infrastructure, AI and human-machine interaction

Digital infrastructure has been examined across the review period as a condition for access, exchange and application. Earlier work linked technological culture and knowledge sharing with organizational performance through digital innovation mechanisms (Mollah et al., 2024). In the 2025 subset, webtop features were associated with employee productivity through knowledge sharing, while technology training moderated some technology paths (Alam et al., 2025). Digital leadership and IT support were linked with organizational learning through sharing (Rahman et al., 2025), and knowledge-management tools were examined in relation to storage, sharing/application and cruise-industry performance (Corcione and Jovanovic, 2025). These studies support a socio-technical interpretation in which technology facilitates—but does not by itself guarantee—performance-relevant knowledge use.

AI introduces a more complex socio-technical relationship. AI adoption improved performance mainly when it fostered exchange and engagement rather than through a direct technology effect (Mahmud et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025). In R&D teams, partner-type human-AI interaction supported sharing and innovation, while steward-type interaction reduced both (Chen, Zhang and Xue, 2025). Perceived risk, communication culture, digital organizational culture and knowledge-protection rules condition these effects. The strategic issue is therefore not AI adoption alone but the role assigned to AI, the provenance and quality of generated content, and the capacity of employees to challenge and contextualize it.

4.2.4 Structure, governance and inter-organizational conditions

Formalization and centralization may offer clarity but can suppress tacit exchange and adaptive innovation. Reverse mentoring produced stronger innovative performance when organizational structures were less formal and decentralized (Panda and Singh, 2025). In megaprojects, formal structure had negative effects on tacit sharing and innovation, whereas trust climate and support were positive (Kan et al., 2025).

Inter-organizational settings require simultaneous openness and protection. Partner attributes, flexibility and co-creation supported sharing and firm performance (Van Trang et al., 2025), while digital transformation improved innovation quality through inter-organizational sharing (Song et al., 2025). In coopetition, procedural rationality strengthened both sharing and protection, whereas organizational politics shifted attention toward protection and weakened ambidexterity (Guo and Xi, 2025). Governance should therefore combine trust, clear decision procedures, ownership rules and differentiated access.

4.3 Theme 2: Forms, directions and quality of knowledge sharing

The evidence distinguishes not only tacit from explicit knowledge but also quantity from quality. Earlier-period research examined intra-organizational sharing, ambidexterity, firm performance and the role of knowledge quality (Dzenopoljac et al., 2024), indicating that the quality of shared knowledge was already becoming analytically salient before 2025. In the 2025 subset, tacit sharing was associated with stronger sharing quality in one SME study whereas explicit sharing was not (Dzenopoljac et al., 2025b). Cross-national evidence further suggests that communication and technological support may contribute differently across cultural settings (Stefanidis et al., 2025).

Knowledge-sharing quality—accuracy, relevance, currency, comprehensibility and actionability—emerged as a central performance condition. Configurational evidence shows that high performance can result from different bundles of trust, ambidexterity and explicit or tacit sharing, rather than from a single best practice (Dzenopoljac et al., 2025a). This supports an equifinality perspective: organizations can reach strong outcomes through different coherent configurations, but isolated interventions are unlikely to be sufficient.

The direction and boundary of exchange also shape value. Donating, collecting, intra-organizational and inter-organizational sharing entail different risks and coordination costs. Human-AI interaction adds a new direction in which machines can function as partners, stewards, retrieval tools or recommendation systems. The performance question shifts from whether knowledge was transmitted to whether recipients could evaluate, combine, adapt and apply it.

4.4 Theme 3: Conversion mechanisms

4.4.1 Organizational learning and absorptive capacity

Organizational learning is repeatedly examined as a mechanism through which individual exchange may become shared understanding, routines and capability. Earlier-period research explicitly tested organizational learning as a mediator between knowledge sharing and employee performance (Meher and Mishra, 2022). In the 2025 subset, knowledge sharing was reported as a mediator linking digital leadership and IT support with organizational learning, which was in turn associated with performance (Rahman et al., 2025). Authentic leadership was likewise examined through sharing and learning pathways to employee performance (Alneyadi and Cherian, 2025). Taken together, these studies are consistent with the proposition that exchange is more likely to matter when it is reflected upon, retained and embedded in collective practices.

Absorptive capacity and the application of lessons learned perform similar roles. Project-based organizations benefited when lessons were interpreted, discussed and incorporated into future work; lack of mentoring, misinterpretation, knowledge hiding and stakeholder non-participation interrupted this sequence (Osobajo et al., 2025).

4.4.2 Innovation, creativity and improvisation

Innovation was the most visible conversion mechanism and performance domain. In Romania, knowledge creation and sharing supported innovation, which linked knowledge management to organizational performance (Cristache et al., 2025). In Indian IT firms, sharing and creation built improvisation capability, which mediated organizational innovativeness (Trivedi and Srivastava, 2025). Supply-chain quality practices improved sharing and innovation, although sharing did not mediate the path to strategic business performance (Lim et al., 2025).

The evidence therefore distinguishes innovation generation from performance realization. Knowledge exchange broadens the idea pool and accelerates recombination, but selection, experimentation, implementation and resource utilization determine whether ideas become products, process improvements or financial gains. This explains why sharing can improve innovation quality but not necessarily speed, or support performance without directly predicting innovation in every context (Song et al., 2025; Ha and Trang, 2025).

4.4.3 Agility, ambidexterity and knowledge quality

Agility and ambidexterity are recurring mechanisms for explaining how organizations adapt while exploiting existing knowledge. Earlier-period work explicitly examined knowledge sharing and organizational agility in relation to organizational performance (Salehzadeh et al., 2017). More recent research has extended this logic toward knowledge quality and exploratory/exploitative ambidexterity (Dzenopoljac et al., 2024; Dzenopoljac et al., 2025a, 2025b). The cumulative evidence is therefore more consistent with a capability pathway than with an unconditional direct effect of sharing on performance.

The sharing-protection balance is a related form of ambidexterity. Firms collaborating with competitors must exchange enough knowledge to innovate while protecting appropriable assets. Procedural rationality supported this balance and new-product performance, whereas politics distorted it (Guo and Xi, 2025).

4.4.4 Empowerment, engagement and application

At employee level, knowledge sharing can improve performance by increasing psychological resources, engagement and problem-solving capacity. Innovative work behavior improved with knowledge sharing, but psychological empowerment did not always function as a simple direct consequence (Maramba et al., 2025). AI-related performance was also transmitted through sharing and work engagement, while perceived risk weakened both paths (Khan et al., 2025).

Application is treated in the framework as the final conversion step. Training, repositories and collaborative systems are unlikely to be performance-relevant unless shared knowledge influences decisions, routines or action. The reviewed literature therefore supports measuring reuse, adaptation, problem resolution, implementation of lessons and decision influence rather than relying only on counts of messages, documents or platform visits.

4.5 Theme 4: Performance outcomes

4.5.1 Employee and individual performance

Employee outcomes include productivity, task performance, innovative work behavior, creative teaching and competitive productivity. Knowledge sharing improves access to expertise and reduces search and coordination costs, but benefits depend on leadership, engagement, perceived risk, structural flexibility and social support. Across the 2014-2025 evidence base, employee-level findings are especially visible in public service, higher education, telecommunications, IT and SME settings.

The employee-level literature also reveals possible trade-offs. Sharing consumes time and exposes contributors to interruption or appropriation; controlled incentives may reduce intrinsic motivation; and knowledge hiding may coexist with short-term competitive productivity. These findings require researchers to distinguish individual advantage from collective and long-term organizational value.

4.5.2 Team, project and innovation performance

Team, project and innovation outcomes are theoretically important because much knowledge work is collaborative or inter-organizational. Earlier-period evidence examined inter-organizational knowledge sharing, innovation capability and enterprise innovation performance (Wang et al., 2022), as well as the contingent roles of trust, formal contracts, market turbulence and innovativeness in interfirm sharing-performance relationships (Sun et al., 2023). The 2025 subset extends this stream through promoter roles, lessons-learned systems, megaproject contexts and human-AI roles affecting team exchange and innovation portfolios (Globocnik and Faullant, 2025; Osobajo et al., 2025; Kan et al., 2025; Chen, Zhang and Xue, 2025).

Innovation outcomes include speed, quality, product and process innovation, new-product development and organizational innovativeness. Knowledge sharing is often a mediator or moderator rather than a direct predictor, emphasizing the importance of complementary capabilities and boundary conditions.

4.5.3 Organizational, financial and sustainable performance

Organizational outcomes span operational efficiency, strategic business performance, financial and non-financial results, perceived organizational performance, agility and sustainability. Trust-induced sharing, strategic leadership, knowledge-management tools and startup innovation capability were associated with stronger organizational performance (Yaqub and Alsabban, 2025; Khalifa et al., 2025; Corcione and Jovanovic, 2025; Lee and Park, 2025).

Sustainability extends the pathway beyond traditional financial indicators. In Moroccan SMEs, leadership and sharing strengthened innovation capability and sustainable performance (Alqatan et al., 2025). In local government, process innovation converted green HRM into efficiency, and knowledge sharing strengthened this path (Duah et al., 2025). Industry 4.0-KM integration was associated with operational, customization and environmental gains (Karimi et al., 2025).

4.6 Theme 5: Boundary conditions, mixed findings and tensions

The strongest synthesis is conditional rather than universally positive. Several studies reported partial, non-significant or role-dependent effects. AI adoption had no direct performance effect in Malaysian SMEs but operated through sharing (Mahmud et al., 2025). Knowledge-sharing competency did not strengthen the AI capability-creativity link in the Sri Lankan IT sector (Jayarathne et al., 2025). Sharing mediated supply-chain quality effects on innovation but not strategic business performance (Lim et al., 2025). Explicit sharing did not improve sharing quality in one SME study (Dzenopoljac et al., 2025b).

Leadership and support effects were similarly selective. Organizational support moderated authentic leadership's effect on sharing but not all learning or performance paths (Alneyadi and Cherian, 2025). Innovative culture strengthened contingent-reward leadership's effect on support but not the leadership-sharing path (Huang et al., 2025). Knowledge-based rewards did not predict innovation performance or quality in Egyptian SMEs (Abdelwahed et al., 2025).

Structural and behavioral tensions are equally important. Formalization and centralization weakened reverse mentoring and megaproject tacit sharing (Panda and Singh, 2025; Kan et al., 2025). Politics hindered sharing while strengthening protection in cooptation (Guo and Xi, 2025). Perceived AI risk reduced sharing and engagement (Khan et al., 2025). One study reported unexpected positive associations between knowledge hiding and selected

performance outcomes, indicating that short-term individual advantage may conflict with collective learning (Tan et al., 2025).

These findings suggest that organizations should optimize rather than maximize sharing. The relevant design variables include knowledge relevance, task dependence, confidentiality, recipient capacity, time pressure, incentives, system usability and protection needs.

Table IV. Representative boundary conditions and mixed findings

Study/context	Boundary or mixed result	Interpretive implication
Dzenopoljac et al. (2025b), SMEs	Tacit sharing improved quality; explicit sharing did not.	Form and context matter more than undifferentiated sharing frequency.
Mahmud et al. (2025), AI in SMEs	AI had no direct performance effect; sharing carried the effect.	Technology creates value through social and learning processes.
Lim et al. (2025), manufacturers	Sharing mediated innovation but not strategic performance.	Innovation conversion and performance realization are distinct stages.
Jayarathne et al. (2025), IT sector	Sharing competency did not moderate AI capability-creativity.	A presumed complementarity may be absent when resources or roles are misaligned.
Guo and Xi (2025), coopetition	Politics reduced sharing and weakened sharing-protection ambidexterity.	Governance and decision quality shape openness-protection balance.
Kan et al. (2025), megaprojects	Formal structure negatively affected tacit sharing and innovation.	Coordination mechanisms can become barriers under complex tasks.
Tan et al. (2025), private sector	Knowledge hiding showed unexpected positive links with some productivity outcomes.	Short-term individual gains may conflict with collective and long-term performance.

4.7 Integrative framework

Figure 4 organizes the evidence into a dynamic conversion framework. Enabling conditions create motivation, opportunity and infrastructure; knowledge-sharing processes differ by form, direction, boundary and quality; and conversion mechanisms such as learning, innovation, agility, ambidexterity, empowerment and application help explain how sharing can be associated with outcomes at employee, team/project, innovation, organizational and sustainability levels. Contextual contingencies operate across the chain, while realized outcomes may feed back into routines, trust and future sharing capacity.

The framework also contains a failure path. Weak quality, overload, hiding, rigid structure, inappropriate AI roles, perceived risk or excessive protection can break conversion even when exchange activity is high. The framework therefore shifts evaluation from communication volume to performance-relevant application.

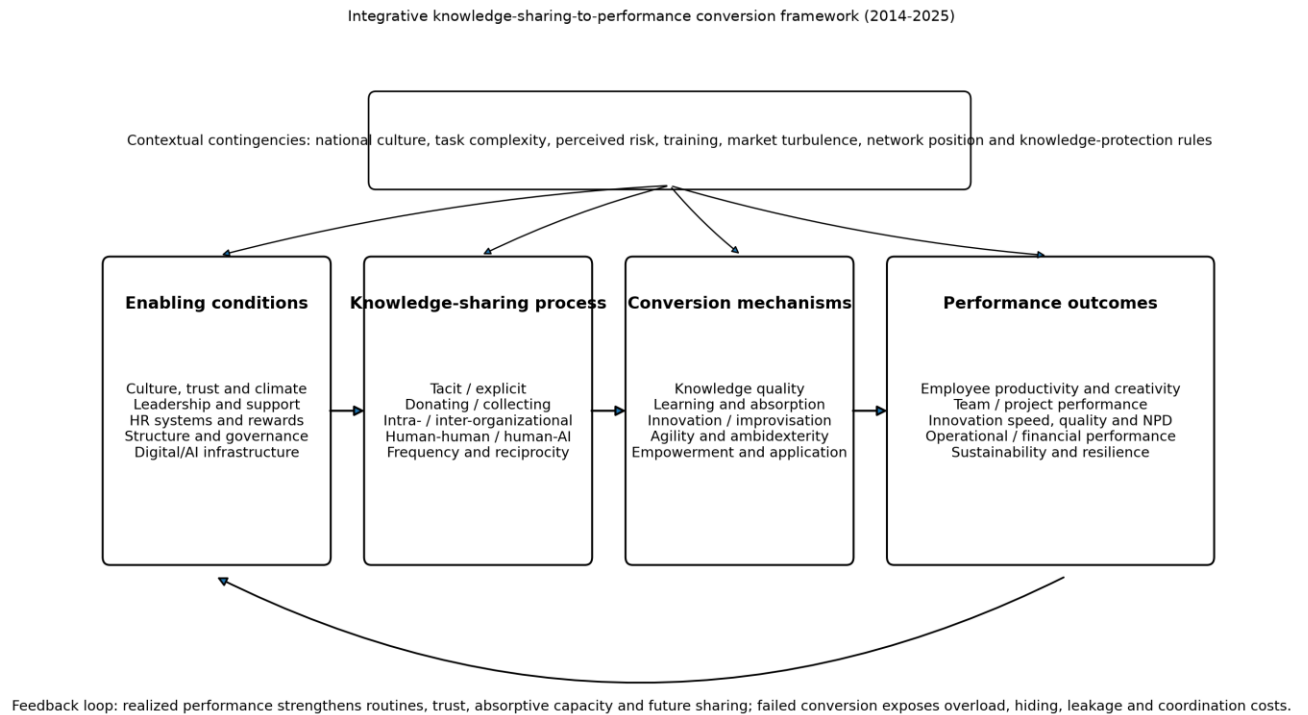


Figure 4. Integrative knowledge-sharing-to-performance conversion framework (2014-2025)

Table V. Thematic synthesis of the knowledge-sharing-performance pathway

Theme	Core evidence	Conversion logic	Main contingencies
Enabling conditions	Culture, trust, leadership, support, HR practices, structure, governance and digital infrastructure shape willingness and opportunity.	Enablers reduce risk, create time/resources and connect actors to relevant knowledge.	National culture, formalization, politics, perceived risk, training and protection rules.
Forms and quality	Tacit/explicit, donating/collecting, intra/inter-organizational and human-AI exchange have different requirements.	Performance depends on relevance, provenance, comprehension and reciprocity, not volume alone.	Task complexity, shared language, tie strength, system usability and confidentiality.
Conversion mechanisms	Learning, absorption, innovation, improvisation, agility, ambidexterity, empowerment and application recur across studies.	Intermediate capabilities explain weak or inconsistent direct effects.	Implementation resources, decision rights, time lags and recipient capacity.
Performance outcomes	Employee, project/team, innovation, organizational, financial and sustainable outcomes are reported.	Proximal outcomes accumulate into distal outcomes at different levels and time horizons.	Measurement level, objective versus perceived indicators and sectoral context.
Boundary conditions and tensions	Non-significant mediation/moderation, hiding, overload, protection and politics challenge a uniformly positive narrative.	Sharing can fail or create costs when quality and governance are weak.	Optimal levels, nonlinear effects, short-versus long-term value and individual versus collective interests.

5 Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of the findings

The review supports a generally positive but conditional association between knowledge sharing and performance. The cumulative insight is not that more sharing automatically produces better results; rather, stronger outcomes are more consistently reported when relevant knowledge is exchanged, validated, absorbed and embedded in decisions and routines. This pattern is consistent with the growing use of mediation, moderation and configurational models and supports a conversion-chain interpretation rather than a simple direct-effect narrative.

The 2014-2025 corpus suggests an emerging late-period shift from predominantly behavior- and organization-centered explanations toward a broader socio-technical capability perspective. Earlier-period studies already examined culture, agility, organizational learning, inter-organizational exchange and knowledge quality, while the 2025 subset places more visible emphasis on AI, human-machine interaction, digital transformation, sustainability and sharing-protection tensions. Because study-level extraction is more granular for 2025 than for 2014–2024, this pattern should be interpreted as a late-period development identified in the available corpus rather than as a definitive field-wide temporal break. AI and digital systems broaden access and recombination but also introduce questions of role design, source traceability, risk, validation and protection.

The evidence remains fragmented across levels. Employee studies emphasize social exchange, support and engagement; innovation studies emphasize recombination and dynamic capabilities; firm studies emphasize culture, agility and strategic alignment. The integrative framework connects these levels: individual exchange supports team cognition and learning; learning enables innovation and operational capabilities; capabilities accumulate into organizational outcomes. Few studies test the full sequence with multilevel and longitudinal data.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

The review contributes to the literature in several respects. One contribution lies in distinguishing knowledge possession, exchange, quality, application and value realization within the knowledge-based view. Across the reviewed evidence, knowledge sharing frequently appears as an important condition or mechanism, but the findings do not support treating it as sufficient for performance without considering the processes through which knowledge is converted into organizational outcomes.

The synthesis also brings together social-exchange, organizational-learning and dynamic-capability perspectives. These theoretical perspectives appear to explain different stages of the conversion process: social and HR conditions influence employees' willingness to share, learning and absorptive processes support collective retention and interpretation, and dynamic capabilities help explain innovation, agility and organizational reconfiguration.

Another contribution concerns the integration of socio-technical and governance contingencies. Digital platforms and artificial intelligence are not neutral channels of knowledge exchange; their contribution depends on role design, perceived risk, provenance, governance and their integration into organizational work processes.

The review further extends the traditional enabler-process-outcome perspective by positioning knowledge quality, ambidexterity and the balance between sharing and protection as central elements of the conversion process. This perspective also makes it possible to incorporate failure paths and potentially negative consequences rather than assuming uniformly positive effects.

Finally, the synthesis develops a multilevel view of organizational performance by distinguishing proximal employee and project outcomes from more distal financial and sustainable outcomes. This distinction reduces the risk of conflating different performance constructs and highlights the importance of considering time lags in future research.

5.3 Managerial implications

Managers should design knowledge sharing around strategic use cases rather than launch generic communication campaigns. The first question is which decisions, problems or capabilities require knowledge; the second is who holds and needs it; the third is how quality and application will be assured.

A practical sequence follows the conversion framework. Diagnose barriers such as low trust, weak support, fragmented systems, rigid structures, high workload or confidentiality risk. Combine social channels for tacit exchange with curated repositories for explicit knowledge. Embed sharing in project reviews, onboarding, innovation gates, training transfer, communities of practice and performance conversations. Assign responsibility for validation, version control and correction. Finally, measure reuse, decision influence, problem-resolution time, process improvement and innovation outcomes rather than uploads or messages.

Leadership must normalize questions, feedback and the admission of uncertainty. Rewards should recognize useful contribution and application without crowding out reciprocity. Inter-organizational sharing requires contracts and

access controls that complement trust. AI-enabled systems require human validation, source traceability, role clarity and procedures for correcting inaccurate or outdated content.

Performance evaluation should use a contribution logic. Organizations can define a theory of change, establish baselines, identify comparison units or phases and collect evidence explaining how shared knowledge changed action. Time lags should be explicit because access can improve immediately while innovation, financial and sustainability outcomes may emerge later.

5.4 Future research agenda

Table VI. Priority future research agenda

Priority	Research question	Recommended design
Causal sequencing	When and how does sharing produce learning, innovation and performance over time?	Longitudinal, cross-lagged, field-experimental and event-based designs.
Multilevel conversion	How do individual exchanges aggregate into team capability and firm outcomes?	Multilevel models linking behavioral, team and objective organizational data.
Knowledge quality and use	Which dimensions of accuracy, relevance, provenance and actionability determine value?	Content-quality ratings, trace data, reuse measures and decision-process observation.
AI role design	When do partner, steward, retrieval or generative AI roles support or suppress sharing?	Socio-technical experiments, digital-trace analysis and comparative case studies.
Sharing-protection ambidexterity	How can firms optimize openness, confidentiality and appropriation in ecosystems?	Network analysis, configurational designs and longitudinal alliance data.
Negative and nonlinear effects	When do overload, hiding, conformity, interruption and leakage offset benefits?	Threshold, nonlinear, diary and risk-sensitive designs.
Cross-cultural and institutional context	How do culture and institutions change communication, trust and performance conversion?	Matched cross-country samples and multigroup invariance analysis.
Measurement harmonization	Can proximal and distal outcome sets improve cumulative evidence?	Scale validation, objective indicators, open protocols and preregistration.

5.5 Limitations

This review is limited to English-language empirical studies indexed in Scopus or Web of Science and to the records assembled for the 2014–2025 period. The search terminology focused on knowledge sharing and performance and may therefore have excluded studies framed primarily in terms of knowledge exchange, transfer, integration, or utilization. The 2014–2024 workflow also included a preliminary title-based relevance filter, which may have led to the exclusion of relevant studies whose focal relationship was reported mainly in abstracts or keywords. To enhance reproducibility, the review documents the database-specific Boolean search strings, search dates, field restrictions, and stage-specific exclusion criteria used during the screening process.

The synthesis is thematic rather than statistical; consequently, theme frequencies reflect the degree of attention given to particular issues in the literature rather than the magnitude of their effects. The underlying evidence is dominated by cross-sectional surveys and self-reported performance measures, which limits causal inference. Review validity is also constrained by the use of a single primary reviewer, although this limitation was mitigated through explicit eligibility criteria, repeated coding, and the maintenance of an audit trail. In addition, the 2025 subset is documented at a substantially greater level of study-specific detail than the 2014–2024 subset. Temporal comparisons should therefore be interpreted as descriptive rather than as formal frequency-based trend analyses. Finally, differences in the completeness of bibliographic metadata, particularly for early-access publications from 2025, may introduce minor inconsistencies in the reporting of publication details.

6 Conclusion

Across the reviewed studies, knowledge sharing is consistently treated as a consequential but conditional correlate, mediator or mechanism of organizational performance. Reported outcomes span employee, project/team, innovation, organizational and sustainable performance, while learning, innovation, improvisation, agility, ambidexterity, knowledge quality, empowerment and application help explain when and how sharing is associated

with value. These relationships are shaped by culture, trust, leadership, support, structure, governance and technology.

Across the 2014-2025 evidence base, and particularly in the 2025 subset, AI and digital systems strengthen a socio-technical interpretation of knowledge sharing. These systems can expand access and recombination, but the reviewed evidence indicates that their performance relevance depends on human roles, perceived risk, communication culture, traceability, validation and governance. Knowledge-sharing quality and the balance between sharing and protection therefore warrant as much attention as sharing frequency.

From a managerial perspective, the findings emphasize the importance of managing the entire knowledge-conversion process rather than focusing solely on communication channels. For research, the results point to the need for more causal, multilevel and context-sensitive designs capable of capturing the conditions under which knowledge sharing contributes to performance..

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Appendix A. Studies published in 2025 within the 2014-2025 corpus: thematic extraction

The table provides detailed study-level evidence for the 2025 subset of the complete 2014–2025 synthesis. It serves as an audit trail for the thematic analysis of this subset. The 2025 extraction is presented in greater detail than the corresponding information available for the 2014–2024 period; consequently, comparisons between the two periods are interpreted descriptively.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
Alam et al. (2025)	Bangladesh telecommunications; survey of 384 employees; PLS-SEM	Mediator between webtop application features and employee productivity	Employee productivity	Usability, integration, real-time access and collaboration features improved productivity through knowledge sharing; training moderated the technology paths unevenly.
Dzenopoljac et al. (2025a)	Serbian SMEs; 260 firms; fsQCA	Knowledge-sharing quality as a configurational condition	High SME performance	High performance arose through multiple configurations. Social trust and exploitative ambidexterity were central under high sharing quality, while explicit sharing and ambidexterity mattered in lower-quality configurations.
Dzenopoljac et al. (2025b)	Serbian SMEs; survey of 260 managers; SEM	Tacit/explicit sharing as antecedents of sharing quality; ambidexterity as mediator	Innovation performance	Tacit sharing strengthened knowledge-sharing quality, whereas explicit sharing did not; sharing quality improved innovation through exploratory and exploitative ambidexterity.
Mahmud et al. (2025)	Malaysian SMEs; employee survey; PLS-SEM	Mediator between AI adoption and employee performance	Employee performance	AI adoption improved knowledge sharing but had no direct effect on performance; knowledge sharing was strongly related to performance and partially transmitted the AI effect.
Panda and Singh (2025)	Indian IT sector; 382 employees; PLS-SEM	Reverse mentoring treated as a bottom-up knowledge-sharing practice	Innovative performance	Reverse mentoring enhanced innovative performance through agility; formalization and centralization weakened its benefits.
Cristache et al. (2025)	Romania; survey of 528 professionals; PLS-SEM	Knowledge sharing as one knowledge-management process	Innovation and organizational performance	Knowledge creation and sharing significantly supported innovation; innovation was the main conversion mechanism linking knowledge management to organizational performance.
Abdelrahman et al. (2025)	MNC employees in Europe and the Middle East; n=221; PLS-SEM	Outcome of cultural and KMS adoption conditions; mechanism for effectiveness	Organizational effectiveness and agility	Adaptability, involvement and mission increased KMS use and knowledge sharing, supporting agility and sustained performance.
Rizki et al. (2025)	Public service organization; census of 177 employees; SEM	Mediator linking work environment and servant leadership to performance	Employee performance	Knowledge sharing was a stronger mediating mechanism than citizenship behavior in converting workplace and leadership conditions into employee performance.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
Awada and Haj Youssef (2025)	Lebanese family business; single case; interviews and questionnaires with 12 participants	Tacit sharing shaped by structure and tie strength	Organizational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness	Organizational structure and intra-/inter-organizational ties shaped tacit knowledge flows; tie strength had differentiated effects across family-firm boundaries.
Globocnik and Faullant (2025)	Cross-industry evidence from 125 firms and 986 employees	Intermediate process influenced by promoter roles	Innovation project portfolio performance	Comprehensive use of promoter roles increased knowledge sharing and reduced competitive conflict, thereby improving portfolio performance.
Alqatan et al. (2025)	Moroccan SMEs; 140 owners/managers; PLS-SEM	Co-driver with transformational leadership	Corporate sustainability performance	Leadership and knowledge sharing strengthened innovation capability; innovation supported environmental adaptation and sustainability performance.
Trivedi and Srivastava (2025)	Indian IT services; 231 employees; SEM/path analysis	Knowledge-sharing process feeding improvisation	Organizational innovativeness	Sharing, creating and storing knowledge strengthened improvisation and innovativeness; improvisation mediated the effect of knowledge sharing and creation.
Lim et al. (2025)	Malaysian manufacturers; 204 responses; PLS-SEM	Mediator from supply-chain quality management	Organizational innovation and strategic business performance	Supply-chain quality practices improved sharing, innovation and performance. Knowledge sharing mediated the innovation path but not the direct path to strategic business performance.
Osobajo et al. (2025)	Project-based organizations; qualitative interviews; social-learning lens	Vehicle for embedding lessons learned	Project success and organizational performance	Sharing and application of lessons supported collective learning and performance, while misinterpretation, weak mentoring, hiding and non-participation obstructed conversion into action.
Duah et al. (2025)	Ghanaian local governments; 227 employees; SEM	Moderator between process innovation and efficiency	Organizational efficiency	Green HRM improved efficiency only through process innovation; knowledge sharing strengthened the process-innovation-to-efficiency relationship.
Kala Kamdjoug et al. (2025)	Marginal healthcare centers in Cameroon; n=168; PLS-SEM and fsQCA	Knowledge-management process influencing process innovation	Process innovation and organizational performance	Sharing, acquisition and knowledge responsiveness supported process innovation, but only acquisition and process innovation directly predicted performance; configurations revealed multiple routes to high performance.
Marampa et al. (2025)	Creative-industry SMEs in Indonesia; 512 employees; SEM	Antecedent of innovative work behavior	Innovative work behavior	Knowledge sharing improved innovative behavior but was not directly associated with psychological empowerment; empowerment and kinship engagement shaped the indirect pathway.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
Yaqub and Alsabban (2025)	Firm-level informants; n=398; PLS modelling	Mediator from organizational trust to firm performance	Firm performance	Organizational trust affected performance directly and through knowledge sharing; organizational culture moderated both the trust-sharing and sharing-performance links.
Jayarathne et al. (2025)	Sri Lankan IT sector; 292 employees; PLS-SEM	Moderator of the AI capability-creativity relationship	Organizational performance	AI capability improved performance directly and through creativity, but knowledge-sharing competency did not significantly strengthen the AI-to-creativity path.
Stefanidis et al. (2025)	Egypt (n=73) and USA (n=67); regression and t-tests	Explicit sharing operationalized through communication and technological support	Perceived organizational performance	Communication and technological support were positively associated with performance; communication was more influential in the US than in Egypt.
Rahman et al. (2025)	South Korean automobile industry; 359 participants; PLS-SEM	Mediator from digital leadership and IT support to learning capability	Organizational performance	Digital leadership and IT support increased knowledge sharing, which fully mediated their effects on organizational learning; learning capability then improved performance.
Lee and Park (2025)	Startups; 154 founders and employees; regression analysis	Outcome of innovation capability and direct predictor of startup performance	Financial and non-financial startup performance	Innovation capability increased knowledge sharing, and sharing improved both financial and non-financial performance; resource utilization was the strongest direct financial predictor.
Ahmad et al. (2025)	Indonesian medium and large firms; 356 employees; PLS-SEM and Bayesian networks	Direct performance predictor within a human-machine system	Organizational performance	Human-machine interaction, knowledge sharing and communication culture were positively associated with performance; communication culture was the strongest system-level condition.
Alneyadi and Cherian (2025)	UAE higher education; 374 staff; SEM	Mediator from authentic leadership to employee performance	Employee performance	Authentic leadership improved sharing, learning and performance; sharing and learning mediated the performance effect, while organizational support moderated only the leadership-sharing path.
Khan et al. (2025)	China; 447 employees; SEM	Mediator/parallel pathway from AI use to employee performance	Employee performance	AI use increased sharing and engagement, both of which improved performance; perceived risk weakened the AI-to-sharing and AI-to-engagement relationships.
Khalifa et al. (2025)	UAE municipal public service; 405 employees; PLS-SEM	Mediator from strategic leadership to performance	Organizational performance	Strategic leadership increased knowledge sharing; sharing significantly mediated leadership effects and directly improved organizational performance.
Chen et al. (2025)	Organizational survey; IT-enabled open innovation	Capability supporting open-innovation adoption	Open innovation adoption and	IT capability and knowledge sharing supported open innovation, which enhanced competitiveness and organizational performance.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
			organizational performance	
Guo and Xi (2025)	Chinese manufacturing firms; n=292; SEM	One side of an ambidextrous sharing-protection capability	New-product-development performance	Procedural rationality supported both sharing and protection, while organizational politics reduced sharing and weakened ambidexterity; ambidextrous knowledge management mediated performance effects.
Abou-Moghli (2025)	Jordanian telecommunications; 575 employees; regression and SEM	Knowledge-sharing dimension within a broader KM system	Organizational performance measurement	Knowledge sharing showed the largest reported contribution among the KM-process dimensions, while innovation capability mediated the overall KM-performance relationship.
Rashid (2025)	Private-school teachers in Babylon, Iraq; survey with regression/factor analysis	Mechanism linking organizational trust to managerial innovation	Managerial innovation capability	Leadership trust and organizational trust supported knowledge sharing, and sharing encouraged teacher innovation; empowerment was not a significant driver.
Van Trang et al. (2025)	Emerging-market SMEs; 550 senior decision-makers; PLS-SEM	Mediator/co-creation mechanism in partner relationships	Organizational performance	Partner characteristics and flexibility facilitated co-creation and knowledge sharing, which supported firm performance.
Ha and Trang (2025)	Vietnamese banks; 279 employees; PLS-SEM	Direct predictor of bank performance and proposed innovation antecedent	Bank performance and innovation	Knowledge sharing and innovation contributed to bank performance, but sharing did not directly predict bank innovation, indicating a non-uniform pathway.
Corcione and Jovanovic (2025)	Carnival Cruise Lines; 283 employees; PLS-SEM	Combined sharing-and-application capability	Organizational performance	Knowledge storage, sharing and application positively affected performance; knowledge-management tools strengthened these relationships.
Song et al. (2025)	Chinese enterprises; 219 firms; PLS-SEM	Mediator from digital transformation to innovation quality	Innovation speed and quality	Digital transformation improved both speed and quality; knowledge creation mediated speed, whereas inter-organizational sharing specifically mediated innovation quality.
Mehner et al. (2025)	Workplace training; survey of 541 employees plus 51 qualitative interviews	Post-training transfer mechanism	Individual organizational results	Training transfer and knowledge sharing improved individual results through motivation and volition; peer and supervisor support enabled both processes and expanded internal knowledge networks.
Chen et al. (2025)	R&D teams in 60 Chinese firms; SPSS/AMOS	Mediator between human-AI role configuration and team innovation	R&D team innovation performance	Partner-type human-AI interaction improved sharing and innovation, whereas steward-type interaction reduced both; sharing partially mediated these effects, with culture and protection rules as contingencies.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
Theuma et al. (2025)	UAE organizations; survey; SEM	Accounting knowledge-sharing capability	Financial, non-financial and innovation performance	Accounting knowledge sharing was positively related to financial and non-financial outcomes and organizational innovation, though non-financial gains did not always convert directly into financial gains.
Abdelwahed et al. (2025)	Egyptian manufacturing SMEs; 316 employees; SmartPLS	Mediator between knowledge-oriented enablers and innovation	Innovation performance and innovation quality	Knowledge-oriented culture and sharing improved innovation performance and quality; sharing mediated top-management knowledge values and culture, but not knowledge-based rewards, whose direct effects were non-significant.
Tan et al. (2025)	Private-sector employees; two-wave online surveys; n=408	Behavior shaped by ethical leadership and motivation	Individual competitive productivity	Ethical leadership and autonomous motivation promoted sharing; the study also reported unexpected positive associations between knowledge hiding and some performance outcomes, challenging uniformly positive assumptions.
Shyyab et al. (2025)	Jordanian banking sector; 418 employees; PLS-SEM	Moderator of transformational leadership effects	Product and process innovation	Transformational leadership improved both innovation dimensions, and knowledge sharing strengthened these relationships.
Karimi et al. (2025)	Smart manufacturing; survey of 120 participants and six expert interviews	Knowledge-sharing layer in Industry 4.0-KM integration	Operational efficiency, customization, sustainability and innovation	Integrated Industry 4.0 and KM systems improved operational and sustainability outcomes; IoT and AI enabled more seamless knowledge flows, provided digital skills and governance were developed.
Koriat (2025)	Knowledge workers across sectors; remote-work model	Teamwork and knowledge-sharing factor in remote work	Employee creativity/innovation and organizational performance	The integrated model linked work-from-home conditions and teamwork quality to knowledge sharing and a combined creativity-innovation outcome that contributes to organizational performance.
Almarashdah et al. (2025)	Jordanian bank; 279 managers/employees; SEM	Mediator between big data and innovation	Product and process innovation	Big-data capability improved innovation, with knowledge sharing playing a significant mediating role in both product and process outcomes.
Mokhchy et al. (2025)	Pakistani textile sector; about 400 lower- and middle-level managers; PLS-SEM	Co-driver with leadership and organizational culture	Organizational performance through innovation capability	Effective leadership, supportive culture and open knowledge sharing reinforced innovation capability and organizational performance.
Kan et al. (2025)	Chinese megaprojects; 243 questionnaires; SEM	Tacit-sharing mediator between organizational context and innovation	Megaproject innovation performance	Formal structure negatively affected tacit sharing and innovation, whereas trust climate and organizational support improved both; tacit sharing mediated the effects of contextual conditions differently.

Study	Context and method	Role of knowledge sharing	Performance outcome	Core finding
Huang et al. (2025)	Kindergarten teachers; 640 questionnaires; mediated-moderation model	Mediator from contingent-reward leadership to creative teaching performance	Creative teaching performance	Perceived organizational support and knowledge-sharing intention mediated the leadership-performance relationship; innovative culture strengthened only the leadership-support path, not the leadership-sharing path.

Appendix B. Thematic codebook

Code family	Illustrative codes	Coding rule
Enabling conditions	Culture, trust, communication, leadership, organizational support, HR practices, rewards, structure, governance, digital/AI infrastructure.	Conditions that affect motivation, opportunity, access or risk.
Forms and directions	Tacit/explicit, donating/collecting, intra-/inter-organizational, human-human/human-AI, formal/informal.	How and across which boundary knowledge is exchanged.
Knowledge quality	Accuracy, relevance, currency, comprehensibility, provenance and actionability.	Whether exchanged knowledge is usable and credible.
Conversion mechanisms	Learning, absorptive capacity, innovation, improvisation, agility, ambidexterity, empowerment, engagement, application.	Processes that transform exchange into capability or action.
Performance outcomes	Employee, team/project, innovation, operational, financial, strategic and sustainable performance.	Level and time horizon of realized value.
Boundary conditions	Culture, task complexity, formalization, risk, training, politics, network position, rewards, protection rules.	Conditions that strengthen, weaken or redirect relationships.
Negative/tension codes	Hiding, overload, leakage, conformity, interruption, conflict and non-significant effects.	Costs, trade-offs or failure paths that challenge a monotonic positive assumption.